

Story 1281 (1988 Tape 12)

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Location: Ahlat, kaza town of
Bitlis Province

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The Maligned Maiden *me*

the dark
under

There was once a very successful merchant who had one son and one daughter. As his business prospered, he decided to move it from his home town to the city of İstanbul. His misgiving about this move was the fact that his daughter, who was a very beautiful girl, might still be too young and inexperienced to live safely in such a great city. He therefore thought it best to leave her in the town for a while longer. In order to protect her in that town, he had a very secure house built for her, and he had all of the windows covered with iron bars. He also hired a prominent hoca ^{ALL} to come to house and teach his daughter the Koran every morning. After the house was finished and he had made all necessary living arrangements for the girl, the merchant took his son with him and went to İstanbul.

Hoca
ALL
removed

The hoca began coming to the house every morning to teach the girl. After a while the hoca was so attracted by the girl's beauty that he asked her to sleep with him. When she would not accept this proposal, he began to think of ways in which he might compel her to marry him. One day it occurred

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to him that he should hire a witch woman¹ to help him solve this problem. Locating a witch woman, he went to her house, gave her some money, and explained his situation to her.

"Come and find some solution to this problem for me."

The woman agreed to undertake this work, and on the following day she dressed well and went to the girl's house. When she knocked on the door, there was at first no response from within. "My girl," she said, "I am almost like a mother to you. I like you, and I am well acquainted with your father. I have come to invite you to attend a very special occasion. The daughter of the padişah is being married, and tomorrow the bride will be taken to the bath² by her female friends.³ The

¹Although the word witch often has connotations of evil--black magic, collaboration with Satan, ghoulish activity--it does not always mean those things when it appears in a Turkish folktale. A witch may be no more than an unprincipled, opportunistic old woman willing to engage in nefarious acts for money. The witch here seems to be primarily that latter sort of person.

²Before the modern era, public baths were common throughout Turkey and they were used by a fairly high percentage of the population for sanitary and/or social purposes. Today, health spas are still numerous, but public baths as facilities for simple cleanliness are not nearly as common as they once were. In all Turkish baths, past and present, designated hours were/are posted for use of the facilities by men only and by women only.

³Village wedding festivities often take a week or more.

Bath, public
73-77

73-75

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padişah sent his greetings to me and invited me to be among the women in the bath tomorrow. I thought that you might like to go there, too."

In the end the girl believed the old woman's account and opened the door to let her come inside. After they had eaten together, the old woman said, "The bath will be very crowded for the special event tomorrow, and if we are to have a good place in the bath, we should go there late tonight in order to hold such a place for ourselves. Get ready, and we shall

As they walked along, the girl said, "Grandmother, there is no one on the streets. Have we not perhaps come too early?"

"No, no, we are probably late. All of the other guests be there already. Come along quickly!"

Although the girl was somewhat frightened, she went along with the witch woman. When they reached the bath, the girl said, "Look, grandmother, there is no one else here!"

"My girl, this bath is so large that it has several other entrances. You cannot hear the noise inside from here. Get

On each day of the festivities, set parts of the overall ritual are enacted. On one day the bride is taken to the bath and given ceremonial ablutions by the other women of the wedding group.

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undressed so that we'll be ready to bathe

The girl got undressed, but the old woman only pretended that she was undressing. She kept unbuttoning and then rebuttoning the same button. The girl said, "Come, grandmother! You get undressed too!"

"My girl, I am an old woman, and my hands tremble so badly it will take me some time to get undressed. You go ahead on to the central room of the bath

The girl had never before been inside a public bath, and she did not know what she should do there. She followed the old woman's instructions and proceeded into the main room. To her surprise, that room seemed entirely empty. When her eyes became accustomed to the dim light there, however, she sitting in one corner the fully clothed hoca. She ran back into the entry room, but the old woman was no longer there. The girl now became quite frightened

The hoca came to her and said, "Let us sit down and talk together."

"Very well," she said

After they had talked for a while, the hoca again asked the girl to sleep with him. Instead of responding to what he had said, the girl said, "We have been here for some time

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without having anything to eat or drink.

"Oh, I can get you whatever you want," said the hoca. He went out into the street to find a restaurant, but of course at that time of night all of the restaurants were closed. He went to the home of a restaurant owner and persuaded him to return to his restaurant and cook some food.

As soon as the hoca had left, the girl dressed and fled from the bath. The streets were dark, and the girl did not know her way, but she kept running in order to get as far from the bath as possible. Just before dawn she came upon an old woman working in a field, but, frightened, she tried to back away before the woman saw her. "Don't be afraid!" called the old woman. "Are you a jinn or some other supernatural being?"⁴

"I am neither, but instead a creature of Allah."

"Well, then, what are you doing out here by yourself at such a time?"

⁴If a person appears suddenly in an unlikely place, the viewer quite understandably becomes wary of the true nature of the intruder. The formulaic query in Turkish is İnmisin cinmisin?--are you a jinn or other supernatural being? In some early interpretations of the word in, it seems to have meant human being, and so the response then is "I am human and not a jinn." But in most uses of this expression in Archive holdings, the question seems to be that given in the text above, for otherwise the response "Neither" would make no sense.

*Formulaic
expression*

76 81

*July
76, 81*

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that I want to do is to find my way back home," answered the girl. She then explained to the old woman what had happened to her.

"Do not be concerned," said the old woman. "Trust me, and I shall see to it that you get back home safely." She then performed some magic that she knew and changed the girl into an apple. Placing the apple in her sash, the woman took the girl to her own home without allowing her to be seen by anyone else. There she used the magic again to restore her to her natural form. To her son the old woman said, "Listen to me carefully! You are to take this girl to her home at such and such a place. Make sure that you get her there completely unharmed, for otherwise I shall never forgive you."

"Come with me," said the young man. "You are similar to being my sister both in this world and the next. I shall take you to your home."

The girl had run a great distance during the night as she fled from the bath, and it took the two of them much of the day before they reached her home. Once inside, the girl locked the door and made a vow not to leave her home again

When the hoca returned to the bath with the food which he had had specially prepared, he discovered that the girl had

Magie 77
Transformation
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left. Very angry about this, he decided to take his revenge against her. The following day he went to the post office and sent the following telegram⁵ to her father: "Your daughter has become a bad woman. She does not listen to what I say, and I can no longer give her lessons. You may do whatever you wish about this."

When the merchant received this telegram, he became very angry. He said to his son, "Return to our hometown and kill your sister for her betrayal of our honor. Bring me her blood-soaked shirt so that I will have proof of her death."

The brother did not believe the hoca's telegram, but he had no choice but to depart at once for the hometown of the family. When he reached that town, he rented a room from which he could observe his sister's house closely. Day and night for an entire week he watched that house to see if his sister had visitors, but during all of that time not a single person entered the building. Convinced now that the hoca had been lying, he finally went and knocked on the front door of his sister's house. She refused to open the door. He shouted at the door that he was her brother, but she did not believe this.

⁵Until late in the twentieth century, Turks had to go to the PTT Office (Postal, Telephone, and Telegraph Office) to make long-distance calls or send telegrams. Since the 1970's Turkish people have had long-distance service and wire service

Accusation,
false

Garma, blood
soaked

8*79

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After a while, however, the girl decided to look out of the window, and then she discovered that the man outside really was her brother. She then opened the door and admitted him into the house

After she had explained the difficulty she had had with the hoca, her brother said, "I have come to take you away from this place." The girl was delighted to hear this, and she quickly packed a few of her personal belongings in preparation to leave. Taking two horses, they rode out of that town. After they had ridden for several hours, the brother said, "I am tired. Let us stop and rest for a while. I shall put my head in your lap and sleep." After he had slept for a short while, he woke up and said, "Now you put your head in my lap and sleep

After the girl had fallen into deep sleep, her brother gently moved her head from his lap and onto a bundle of clothing. He then killed a partridge and let its blood flow over one of her shirts. Then, taking the bloody shirt and the two horses, he quietly departed.

available on their individual home phones. --The reference to a telegram in this ancient tale is, of course, anachronistic, but such updating and inconsistencies in chronology are not uncommon in folktales.

¶ When the girl awoke, she found herself completely alone.

started walking from that place without knowing where she was going. After a short while she saw a shepherd grazing his flock at one side of the road. She said to this shepherd, "I shall give you some gold and all of the clothes in this bundle in exchange for your clothes and your hat." The shepherd gladly accepted that offer.

The girl had very long hair which she now wished to hide. To do this, she rolled it all up on the top of her head and plastered it down with mud from the bank of a nearby stream. Then she pulled her hat down tightly over it so that she would look like a keloçlan.⁶ Seeming to be a man, she walked along, crying as she went. When she became tired, she sat down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

It so happened that the place where she sat down was within an area that had been reserved that day for the hunting of the padişah's son. No one was permitted to be in that area.

⁶The word keloçlan means bald boy, but the baldness is not that caused by aging. It is caused by ringworm infestation of the scalp. This disease often strikes the younger and perhaps improperly tended younger children of large peasant families. It is encouraged by uncleanness. In folktales the keloçlan is a definite personality type, a winner, and a sympathetic figure. In tales the keloçlan image is often used as a disguise. Disguisers hide their hair by covering it either with a sheepskin turned inside out or with the cleaned lining of a sheep's stomach.

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Riding up to the girl, he said, "Hey, keloğlan, what are doing here?

İnmisin cinmisin?"

"I am just a poor keloğlan who wandered here."

When the prince knocked off the girl's hat with his sword, her long hair fell down her back. The son of the padişah was startled at this, and he asked again, "İnmisin cinmisin? What about your hair?"

"If you are really the son of the padişah, then listen to what has happened to me." She explained what the hoca had done to her and next what her brother had done. Then she began to cry.

"Don't cry," said the padişah's son. He took her up on the horse behind him and returned immediately to the palace. There the girl repeated the account of her experience to the padişah himself. Because he was a very kindhearted man, padişah pitied her. He invited her to live at the palace, and after some time had passed, he had her married to his son.

The son of the padişah and his wife were very happy in their marriage. They had a son, a second son, and then a

⁷See Footnote 4 above.

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third son. One day as she was rocking the youngest child in his cradle, the girl began thinking of her father and her brother. As she continued to think of them, she began to cry. The son of the padişah happened to be passing the nursery at that time, and he asked her why she was weeping. "I am the son of the padişah. Why should my wife be weeping? Tell me what the trouble is.

"I suddenly realized how much I missed my father and my brother. That is what made me cry."

"Very well. Make preparations to travel, and I shall send you there to visit them."

The padişah ordered one of his viziers to take a number of soldiers and escort his daughter-in-law safely to İstanbul and back. One the following day the group, led by the vizier, began their journey. But there was a problem of which neither the padişah nor his son was aware, and that was the fact that the vizier was secretly very fond of the girl. At the end of the first of travel when they made camp for the night, the vizier ordered that the soldiers' tents be pitched at some distance away but that his tent be pitched alongside of that of the girl. After it was dark, the vizier went to the girl's tent and said, "You are to sleep with me."

"I cannot be unfaithful to my husband by sleeping with

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you," she answered.

"Then I shall cut off the ears of your children."

"Very well," she said.

After he had cut off the ears of the children, he again asked their mother to sleep with him. When she again refused to do so, he said, "If you do not sleep with me, then I shall kill your children."

"Very well.

After all three of her children had been killed, the girl said, "I must go to the toilet. While I am there, I shall think about your request and perhaps accept it."

"No, I shall not let you out of this tent, for if I do, you would run away."

"No, I wouldn't. If you think I would, then tie a rope around my waist and hold the other end yourself." The vizier agreed to this, and the girl walked outside with the rope tied around her waist. She walked until she came to a large rock. Then she carefully untied the rope from her waist and tied it around the rock.

Every minute or two the vizier pulled gently on the rope, and every time he did so, he felt a weight on the other end. But after a while when she did not return to the tent, he grew

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suspicious. When he tried to pull the rope back into the tent, he was unable to do so. Then he discovered that the rope was tied to a rock and that the girl had escaped.

The vizier rushed to the tents of the soldiers and shouted, "Come quickly! The wife of the padişah's son has murdered her children and run away. All of you spread out and find her!" They searched all around the encampment and along the trails in the nearby mountains, but they were unable to find any trace of her. They then returned to the palace, and the vizier told the padişah exactly what he had told the soldiers about the behavior of the girl

Meanwhile the girl walked until on the following morning she saw a shepherd with his flock. As she had done before, she gave this shepherd some gold for his clothes and hat. And again she rolled her hair up to the top of her head and plastered it there with mud. Hiding all of her hair beneath the shepherd's hat and wearing his clothes, she looked like a man. She then proceeded to walk the rest of the way to İstanbul.

She went to the district of the city where her father and brother lived. There she asked some children playing in the street which was the house of such and such a merchant. When

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she had located her father's house, she sat before one of its front windows and nibbled at some orange peelings and crumbs that she found there.

When her brother looked out the window and saw her, he said, "Father, there is a very poor person sitting in front of our house. Let us give him some food." The merchant agreed to this, and the young man called, "Keloğlan, come here and get some food. We need a gooseherd. Would you be willing to look after our geese?"

"Yes, of course. I can look after your geese, take care of your house, and even cook for you." So the keloğlan lived there and provided the services he had offered.

Back in the hometown of that family, the son of the padişah refused to believe what the vizier had reported about his wife. He said to his father, "I am going to investigate this matter until I learn the full truth about it." His father agreed that he should do that, and the prince began to work on the problem at once.

Taking the vizier with him, he went first to the hoca who had started all of the suffering of the girl. He asked the hoca to relate what he knew about the girl's past, but the hoca refused to speak. "Very well, then. Come along with me

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Retracing the course that the vizier and the soldiers had followed, they started out for İstanbul. After they had passed the point where the group had camped for the night, the son of the padişah questioned every person they met along their way.

Most of the people he questioned denied having seen the girl. But the shepherd remembered her very well and told the prince what he knew about her. "She gave me some gold coins for my clothes and my hat," he said.

One day shortly after that, the keloğlan was feeding her geese when she saw approaching the son of the padişah (her husband), the vizier, the hoca, and the shepherd. Of course they did not recognize her. She said to them, "You must be strangers here. Are you looking for someone?"

"Yes, we are looking for the home of such and such a merchant."

"Oh, he is my ağa⁸ and he is a very good person. I tend

⁸ An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

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his geese. Come along, and I shall take you to him." Taking them to his house, she announced, "Ağa, you have guests."

8 Annoyed at first, the merchant asked, "What kind of guests would you be likely to find, Keloğlan?" But seeing how respectable the men looked, he invited them to sit down and have dinner with him. When they had all finished eating and drinking, the merchant called, "Keloğlan, come and tell us a story to help us pass the evening pleasantly

"Yes, I can do that, my ağa, but on one condition."

"What is that condition?"

"The doors must all be locked, and no one must be allowed to leave this room until I have finished my story."

"Very well," said the merchant

Then the girl began her story. "There was once a girl who was left in a small town after her merchant father and brother had moved their business to İstanbul."

At this point the hoca arose and said, "Excuse me, but I must go to the toilet.

"No, no!" said the girl. "No one may leave until I have finished my story." And the hoca was forced to sit down again.

The girl then continued her story. "Before he left, the girl's father had hired a hoca to go to her house every day and teach her lessons from the Koran. But that hoca tried to force her to sleep with him, and when she refused to do so, he

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sent lies about her in a telegram to her father. Her brother did not believe those lies, and he went back from İstanbul and took her from that town but later deserted her somewhere in the countryside. Buying the clothes of a shepherd, she pretended that she was a keloğlan. When the son of the padişah caught her in his hunting preserve, he discovered that she was a girl and not the keloğlan she pretended to be. He took her to the palace and was later married to her. They had three sons."

When the vizier heard the remark about the girl's sons, he arose and said, "Please excuse me. I must go to the toilet."

as before, the keloğlan protested, saying, "No one may leave the room until the story is finished." The vizier was compelled to sit down and remain.

The girl then went on. "Although the girl led a very happy life in the palace with her husband and children, she missed her father and brother. Her husband therefore arranged to have a vizier and a company of soldiers escort her to İstanbul to visit her father and brother. Along the way, however, the vizier asked the girl to sleep with him. When she refused, he cut off the ears of her three children. When she refused a second time, he killed the three children. The girl fled and again bought the clothes of a shepherd and pretended to be a keloğlan. She then walked the rest of the way to İstanbul and found a job with a merchant in this city."

Right then, the girl pulled off her hat, and her long hair fell down around her shoulders. Speaking to the son of the

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padişah, she said, "Your host is my father, and the person sitting next to him is my brother. That hoca is the same one who first tried to seduce me, and that vizier is the same vizier who later tried to seduce me and then murdered my children." As she said that, she threw the ears of the children on the floor before him. "And you are the son of the padişah, and you are my husband

After the whole group was taken to the palace, the padişah had the hoca severely punished and the treacherous vizier executed. To celebrate the reunion of the son of the padişah and his wife, a second wedding was held for them which lasted for forty days and forty nights.

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